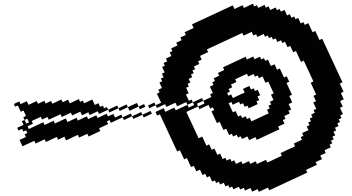


ON TARGET



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GEORGIA DOT, FHWA'S "VITAL FEW" PROMISES TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS FOR GEORGIA'S MASSES



One of the objectives of the partnerships is to alleviate traffic congestion in the state's metro areas.

Commissioner Coleman and Georgia Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Administrator Bob Callan recently entered into an agreement to work together to achieve goals in three vital areas: safety, congestion mitigation, environmental streamlining and stewardship. Georgia DOT and FHWA

will develop joint strategic activities that demonstrate progress in transportation and project development areas FHWA has dubbed "the vital few". The Office of Planning and the Strategic Planning Branch will be participating in the development of safety and congestion programs targeted to addressing the vital few. Over 1,500 Georgians are killed and over 120,000 are injured on the state's roadways each year. GDOT and FHWA are committed to finding ways to reduce the injury and fatality rate.

Each year congestion levels worsen as population growth and travel increases faster than system capacity. GDOT and FHWA are looking to establish partnerships to reduce delays, to find ways to minimize the traffic caused by DOT construction and maintenance activities and to establish regional incident management programs.

The third area of the vital few is environmental stewardship and streamlining. The focus here is to balance the need to streamline our environmental processes while minimizing the possible negative effects of our work on the community and the ecosystem.

The partnership between FHWA and GDOT is strengthened by our pursuit of these common goals to help us improve in the vital few areas. GDOT will be calling on our partners in the industry to help us better define our goals, objectives and measures. We will also need the help of our partners to achieve these goals. GDOT looks forward



Georgia's rural areas are also experiencing major growth. New initiatives will attempt to balance the need for improved transportation while minimizing negative effects on the local community.

to working together to improve the transportation system serving the citizens of Georgia.

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As traffic and congestion increases on Georgia's roadways, reducing the injury and fatality rate becomes a top priority for transportation agencies.

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GDOT, FHWA Host MPO CONFERENCE FOR THE STATE'S URBANIZED AREAS

Georgia DOT, in partnership with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), hosted a Metropolitan Planning Conference for all existing and newly designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) this past October 28-30, 2002.

The conference focused on a variety of topics including the census, federal aid, financial planning, public involvement, environmental justice, transit, bike and pedestrian issues, long range planning, freight planning and air quality. These topics were requested by the MPOs as areas to focus on in their transportation planning efforts.

MPOs are designated by the Governor as recipient of Federal planning funds. MPOs are responsible for coordinating the transportation planning process within a metropolitan region. Planning partners include local, State and Federal representatives. Establishment of the MPOs is a result of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962. This Act required urbanized areas of over 50,000 in population to have a cooperative, comprehensive and continuing transportation planning process in order to qualify for Federal funding used for maintenance, safety and improvement of existing transportation facilities and public transportation systems.

Presently, Georgia has 11 MPO's-Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Brunswick, Chattanooga, Columbus, Macon, Rome, Savannah and Warner Robins. As a result of the 2000 census, Dalton, Gainesville, Hinesville and Valdosta were identified as urbanized areas of over 50,000 in population.

The MPO conference began back in the 1980s out of an initiative by GDOT to foster professional development and to work together with the MPOs to develop procedures for implementing new metropolitan planning practices.

In cooperation with state and local leaders, the Georgia Department of Transportation is committed to building and maintaining top-quality roads that meet mobility needs with environmental sensitivity.

If you have any questions about the 2002 MPO Conference please contact Radney Simpson at 404-656-5560 or email Radney.Simpson@dot.state.ga.us

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TRANSPORTATION STUDY TO EXAMINE TRAFFIC NEAR CIVIL WAR SITE



GDOT will manage the study with the National Parks Service and the Federal Highway Administration to evaluate the impacts of area growth and traffic on the park's landmarks and resources.

Beginning on September 18, 1863, one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War was fought in the forests and fields near West Chickamauga Creek in northwest Georgia. Three days of fighting, in an attempt to control the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee, would result in the loss of more than 34,000 soldiers. Twenty-five years after the end of the war, the U.S. Congress established the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, the first such designation in the country, in order to preserve and commemorate this pivotal battlefield.

Jump to the year 2001 where up to 21,000 cars per day are traveling the roads of the battlefield, threatening the unique historic and cultural resources of the park and detracting from the memorable experience of the park's visitors. In an effort to help combat these congestion issues, US 27, the heavily traveled route which previously bisected the battlefield, was relocated around the western boundary of the park.

The National Park Service (NPS) is now funding a study to examine the effects of this new facility on traffic, as well as to evaluate the future impacts of the area's growth and traffic on the park's treasured resources. The Georgia Department of Transportation has been asked to manage this study in cooperation with the NPS and the Federal Highway Administration.

This project will consist of two key components, a Traffic Impact Study and a Subarea Transportation Plan. The impact study will investigate current and future transportation needs and identify potential solutions for communities surrounding the park, with a specific focus on the traffic

volume and congestion changes that have resulted from the relocation of US 27. The subarea plan will analyze access and mobility needs within the park and offer a set of transportation alternatives that both meet these needs and help preserve the park's valuable resources.

The study is still in the early stages of development, as the Department has recently selected a consultant and is currently finalizing a contract. The consultant is expected to begin work by early January.

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The Department hopes to preserve this vital link to Georgia's past as the area manages more traffic.

REGIONAL MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY AIMS TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC IN NORTH GEORGIA COUNTIES



Georgia's rapid growth has spread to the state's once rural communities, expanding the need for comprehensive transportation studies in these areas as well as in urban areas.

The Office of Planning is partnering with Habersham, Rabun, Stephens, and White Counties to conduct a regional multi-modal transportation study of these four Northeast Georgia Counties.

Working with these county partners, under the direction of the Office of Planning, Day Wilburn Associates is conducting the study.

These four counties have been experiencing rapid growth, both in population and in the number of people traveling in the area. Not only do the people who live there appreciate the beauty, but people from all over the state and surrounding area do as well. The four counties share a wealth of natural, historical, recreational, and environmental locations that attract people year round. These counties share growth patterns, have similar topography and have an interconnected highway network of arterials and collectors.

Planners and engineers will evaluate the existing transportation network, project future needs, and make recommendations to correct existing deficiencies and meet future needs. Current services and future needs with respect to highways, airport access, bike and pedestrian facilities, public transit, and railways will be evaluated.

Since the study began, a "kick-off" meeting was held in October in Stephens

County with key project stakeholders and local government officials. In November, the first round of public information meetings was held in each county. Public involvement is important throughout the progression of the study because it provides an opportunity for the public to provide input, guidance and direction during this process. Following the public involvement meetings and analysis of public comments, future transportation forecasts will be made and recommendations to improve the performance of the transportation system in the future will be developed. A second round of public meetings will be held early 2003 to present recommendations from the study.

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GDOT PARTNERS WITH GREENHORNE & O'MARA FOR DALTON/WHITFIELD COUNTY TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Transportation needs in the City of Dalton and the Whitfield County area are changing. The Office of Planning has contracted with Greenhorne & O'Mara to evaluate the transportation system in the area with respect to all modes of transportation, such as highways, airport access, bike and pedestrian facilities, public transit, and railways.

A comprehensive transportation plan will be developed that will address current and future (2025 year) transportation needs. The Dalton/Whitfield area has been designated as an urbanized area as a result of the 2000 Census and the final study will provide the new MPO with a good basis for their Long Range Transportation Plan. Long term, mid term and short term projects will be identified as a result of the study, providing officials in Dalton and Whitfield County with a list of prioritized projects for the next 20 years.

The study was initiated in September and an advisory group identified. A kick-off meeting and an advisory group meeting were held in October. An advisory group meeting was held December 19th. Public meetings will be scheduled between now and the expected completion date of the study in early April.

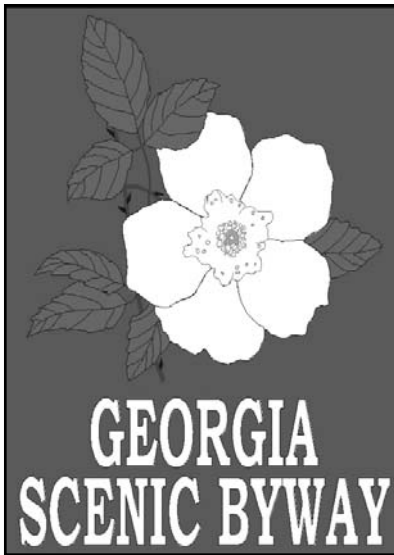


New study will expand the transportation options for the growing city of Dalton and Whitfield County in North Georgia.

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GEORGIA SCENIC BYWAYS CONFERENCE UPDATE



The Scenic Byways Program was developed to protect the culture, history and landscape of Georgia's treasured corridors.

The second Georgia Scenic Byways Conference, originally planned for October 2002, has been rescheduled for April 14 - 15, 2003 and will be held at Unicoi State Park near Helen, Georgia. The conference will appeal to byways newcomers by providing an introduction to the program and a description of the designation process. Current byways sponsors will benefit from information on preservation, promotion, and enhancement. The conference agenda will include a tour of the Russell-Brasstown National Scenic Byway as well as breakout sessions on such topics as byway tourism and marketing, resource conservation, and project funding.

Registration materials will be available shortly and if you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Jordan Hoffman, State Scenic Byways Coordinator at 404-651-7603.

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